

On August 9, 2010, the House Committee on Rules considered H.R. 1586, a measure which provides emergency aid to states to fund teacher jobs and Medicaid and closes tax loopholes that encourage corporations to ship jobs overseas.

During debate on the legislation, I argued against claims made by Representative Pete Sessions (R-TX) that Democrats are systematically opposed to our nation's free enterprise system. Below is an excerpt from Mr. Sessions' remarks followed by my response.

Mr. Sessions:

And I just think that what you are doing here in Washington is about, as I said February, a full year ago, 2 years ago, you have -- the Democrat Party, the Speaker, and the President -- has an animus against the free-enterprise system; that you intend to gut the free-enterprise system and diminish them in such a role that we will continue losing jobs.

Lastly, the point that I would make is July 29 or 30, whenever a week ago Saturday was, in the Washington Post there was an article that said the short- and long-term guess by the Department of Labor and Commerce is that we will grow at such an anemic rate that we cannot even sustain the loss of 131,000 jobs per month, which was the net last month. We will continue to lose jobs. And this right here is a prime exhibit A of exactly how you go about diminishing the free-enterprise system, causing us to have long-term unemployment and gutting the free-enterprise system, which has been the backbone of this country for all these years. They made our grandparents, our parents and us successful.

And I will say openly that this is a vote that is anti-free-enterprise system. And I would love to see some common sense invoked by members of this wonderful committee, because this is the only hearing that will take place. And I think in full representation of a system which I came up here supporting, which I believe I have tried to be faithful to, is going to suffer even greater. And I would hope that we would recognize the diminishment further of our country, which will place us in circumstances where people will become beggars.

Mr. Hastings:

Now, the simple fact of the matter is, Mr. Sessions, I want to make this very clear, I was born in 1936, and multinational corporations did not operate to the degree that they do during the Second World War and thereafter. And our economy, our free-enterprise system, thrived.

I am a little bit tired of Members on the other side and in the realm of this great country of ours taking on myself, the President, countless others on this committee and calling us Socialists; giving names even bordering on calling us -- and some do in the media -- Communists. That is ridiculous. All of us have the same patriotism that you do. We have ideological differences.

For example, I don't think I want you to build a tower of virtue and lie in the bed of Exxon and tell me how great they are. They are a great company. And I assure you this: based on millionaire friends and billionaire friends of mine -- you hear me talk about the four of them that I know -- and every one of them has said to me, you make a law, I will find a loophole. Exxon has lawyers and accountants right now working on this particular measure. I guarantee you they are going to make more money. If I invested in stock, I certainly would invest in them because I know they are going to make money.

But it is multinational selfishness and greed. And the fact that multinational and national corporations don't have a conscience that allows us in this same measure -- in this same measure -- allows us to cut food stamps or the nutrition program, which we all know for every dollar spent on food stamps, we get a \$1.76 back into the Treasury, and we also know that it is the quickest stimulus to the economy, and yet we find ourselves with a \$11.9 billion cut over a 10-year period of time. And then there is only a small cut. It is a billion dollars. Small by some measures, but for a country boy, it ain't all that small. A billion dollars over 10 years out of the earned income tax credit, an option that only 3 percent of eligible EITC recipients now use.

Now, those are poor people. Most of them are women. And they are working. And they have children. And that is just a little bitty something. And you are going to sit here and tell me that I have got to worry about the billions of dollars Exxon makes versus the little \$300 that some woman might have gotten. And I have got to vote for a bill that is going to take that out -- and, yes, it is paid for. That is what you all always argue. So it is paid for.

But I repeat, don't you build a tower of virtue for me about any multinational corporations. I don't resent the fact that corporations exist. I don't resent the fact that there are billionaires and

millionaires and that people earn money in this free-enterprise system. But we won't have a system at all if we don't do the things that are necessary to uplift this economy and get on with the realistic notion that it didn't happen overnight.

It didn't happen under Bush, it certainly didn't happen under Obama. It didn't happen under Clinton. My mama used to say, if you are going to go back and point your finger at what other President, then you would have to say George Washington did it all then.

The fact is over a 40-year period of time, this economy transitioned. And it transitioned on Exxon's watch and on Mary Kay's watch and on AT&T's watch, yours and mine. And it didn't happen overnight, and it is not going to be recovered overnight. And the sooner we tell the American people that, the better.

Thank you, Madam Chair.